

**WASHINGTON, D.C.—** Today, the National Marine Fisheries Service finalized a biological opinion on the Central Valley Water Project and State Water Project. The opinion stated fish populations are in jeopardy without swift modifications to the Central Valley and State Water Projects. Following this release, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) released the following statement.

“This decision is unwise, and will have very serious implications for Valley farmers and communities,” said Costa. “The decline of fisheries in the Delta can be attributed to a variety of factors, including tertiary treatment from sewage facilities in the Sacramento and Stockton area which cause ammonia to drain into the Delta, over 1,600 private pumps in the Delta diverting water without screens, non-point source pollution from the surrounding urban areas, striped bass and other invasive species. Our state’s agricultural community cannot bear the entire brunt of this multifaceted problem. They are always the first to suffer when environmental opinions are released or implemented. I believe that the Delta does need restoration, but not at the expense of agriculture, and especially my constituents.”

The opinion stated that the current pumping operations in the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project should be changed to increase the long-term survival of winter and spring-run Chinook salmon, steelhead, the North American green sturgeon and Southern Resident killer whales. The whales rely on Chinook salmon runs for food.

Recommended changes in water operations will impact an estimated five to seven percent of the available annual water moved by the federal and state pumps, or an estimated 330,000 acre feet per year. These changes come on top of water cuts to Valley farmers and cities this year, which have had major negative impacts on the San Joaquin Valley’s economy.

Dr. Ian Fleming stated in a peer review of the biological opinion that some of the analyses would “benefit from more explicit attention” which includes “the additive nature of stressors and non-linear responses”. Costa believes this includes the major other factors that are contributing to the decline of Delta health.